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Asian Trash Cinema

HORROR ISSUE:

featuring

GAMERA: GUARDIAN OF THE UNIVERSE

GODZILLA VS THE DESTROYER

EVIL DEAD TRAP 1 • 2 • 3

plus lots more

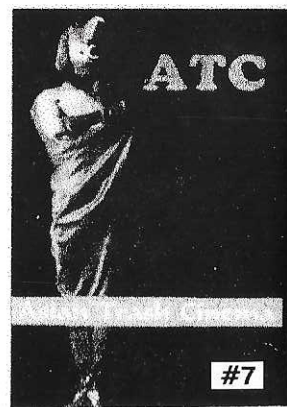
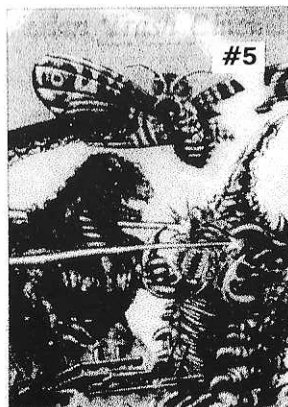


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Asian Trash Cinema

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Asian Trash Cinema

Editor: Tom Weisser • Manager: Scott Williams • Design/Artwork: Francine Dali

Editorial from Tom Weisser

Welcome to 1996. We are now a year away from the big takeover, the change of command, in Hong Kong. It's difficult to imagine the ramifications of China controlling the biggest commercial port in the world. International leaders continue to discuss it guardedly. In the realm of **Asian Cinema**, the big question is yet to be answered: Will everything remain the same in Hong Kong? or will the film industry see government censorship and political control similar to that currently enforced in China itself?

When I visited HK a couple years ago, I was surprised by the number of strangers who approached me in the street with questions about America's position on the take over. After all, what could I do about it? I was nothing more than a tourist. Yet many people vented their anger over the inevitable fate of HK; they believed that somehow the Anglos (British and Americans) had betrayed them. One gentleman related a tale of peril as he described his escape from Red China and expressed fear of being at their mercy again. My overwhelming impression was that of trepidation from most everyone, young and old alike.

Publicly, most of the major filmmakers say they're going to stick it out and see what happens, but the reality seems to be much different. **Ronnie Yu** has already set up operations in Australia, of course **John Woo** is currently working in America, **Ringo Lam** has relocated to New Jersey, and I recently read **Kirk Wong** has now secured a William Morris agent in New York.

At the same time, the American studios continue to take a positive, although apprehensive, interest in Asian cinema. **Ed Pressman** is planning a remake of **Painted Faces** (the story of **Jackie Chan** and **Samo Hung**'s school days) with **Samo** as a teacher; **Wong Kar Wai**'s latest film, **Fallen Angels**, has just secured a US and British release and he's ready to sign a United States/Hong Kong coproduction deal for a sequel to **Days of Being Wild**; **Chow Yun Fat** is making the rounds in Hollywood, visiting production companies and proving his English is better than **Arnold Schwarzenegger**'s; **Jackie Chan** has finally made a distribution deal with **New Line Cinema**; and speaking of **New Line**, they just announced a (decidedly absurd) plan of remaking **Ringo Lam**'s **Full Contact** with an American cast and director.

Perhaps the salvation for Hong Kong filmmaking is the Hollywood Machine. But are the American studios smart enough to accept Asian cinema for what it is? or will they try to shape it into some kind of homogenized hybrid? I think we're all a bit afraid of that answer.

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GODZILLA VS THE DESTROYER

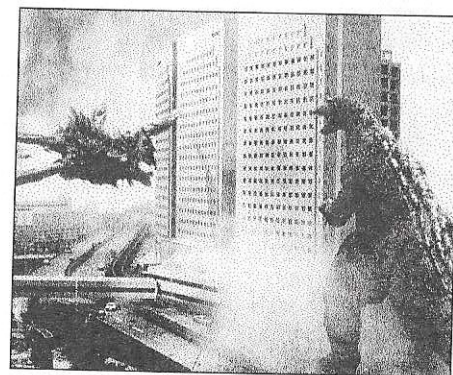
by Thomas Weisser and Yuko Mihara Weisser

Godzilla is back for the 22nd time. And seemingly, this is the Big Guy's last appearance as a Japanese *Kaiju Eiga*. On December 9, the new **Godzilla Vs The Destroyer** (1995) opened in theaters all over Japan to a wide-spread publicity campaign: "Godzilla meets Death when he meets the Destroyer!" And true to the advertising hype, for the second time in his long career, Godzilla does indeed die at the film's conclusion.

The movie opens with Godzilla wrecking havoc in Hong Kong. His body has taken on a reddish hue and scientists report to G-Force that he looks like "a furnace ready for an atomic explosion." Not only is Godzilla capable of destroying everything in his path through sheer bulk and brutality, but now his cells are mutating and radiumized (the result of an infection after doing battle with Space Godzilla last year). Any penetration of his skin could trigger a nuclear explosion which would destroy life on the planet. Thus, orders are issued not to use any kind of military force against Godzilla.

Meanwhile, deep in the murky waters of Tokyo Bay, a new creature is stirring, evolved from the residue of the Oxygen-base Enzyme which originally destroyed Godzilla back in 1954. This new monster, called the Destroyer, is a completely alien life-form with a unique anti-oxygen biological chromosome structure, nurtured on the ocean floor without anyone's knowledge. Until now.

Despite the protests from bleeding-heart psychic Dr Saegusa (once again played by Emi Kodaka), the scientists at G-Force Headquarters decide to use Destroyer against Godzilla. Popular TV actor, **Takuro Tatsumi**, is the rouge agent who discovers Destroyer's deadly secret too late. And even though Godzilla is dead, now there's a new round of trouble.



Mercifully, director **Takao Ohgawara** downplays the environmental issues which overpowered the previous installments, however he still has a major continuity problem here. If Destroyer is born from the waste of the weapon which killed Godzilla in 1954, how come Godzilla's alive at all?

The bigger question, of course, is "why does Godzilla die in this one?" In November of 1994, Toho Studios launched an extensive campaign celebrating Big G's 40th birthday, a promotion which included billboards, TV spots, magazine and newspaper ads, plus special video and laser disk collections, not to mention a hit movie **Godzilla Vs Space Godzilla**. So why is the studio killing off their biggest boxoffice draw a year later?

It most probably has to do with the multi-million dollar deal between Toho and America's Tri-Star Films. Presumably, with Godzilla coming to make movies in the States, his tenure at Toho has ended.

But fear not. Things are not always what they seem. A new Japanese "Godzilla" film is already in preparation. Daddy G may be dead, but his son (introduced in **Godzilla Vs Mechagodzilla** [1993]) is growing like hell. And he shares an amazing likeness to his father.

REVIEWS REVIEWS REVIEWS REVIEWS

REVIEWS

AMAZING STORIES

1993

Directed by Lee Han Chang

Reviewed by John Crawford

This is an anthology film featuring bizarre horror tales of Chinese folklore. A Category III movie, it features a fine blend of soft-core sex, gratuitous violence and high flying super kungfu. Each of the three segments features beautiful cinematography, crisp editing and hauntingly wonderful performances by the actors and actresses.

The first story is entitled *Baby Doll*. A young wife is abused by her older husband Chao; mentally, physically, sexually. She finds solace from her miserable existence with her "baby doll", dressed as a handsome prince, talking to it as though it were a person. This couple lives and works at a laundry, along with a retarded brother with a heart of gold. One day when the evil Chao is again attacking the sweet young beauty she calls out to the retarded man for help. Not comprehending the woman's pleas, he brings her the doll. Chao throws the doll into the laundry's water basin.

Trying to retrieve the doll for his frightened friend, the simple man drowns. Later in the night, the ghost of the retarded man returns and is transformed into a large *Baby Doll* who beats the wicked spouse. The wife falls in love with *Baby Doll* when the husband runs away scared. When he finally returns, the two men do some 'real' kungfu [no wire] and everything ends up pretty bad.

The second of the three stories involves a gravedigger and a couple of demons taking revenge for something or other. A young boy sets a captured animal free and is beaten by the trapper. Left for dead, the child is revived by a beautiful spirit of the night. Thirty years later, this fellow is working in a graveyard. A couple makes love nearby and the woman morphs into a demon vampire witch. The actress who plays this witch is incredibly hot and the scene has lots of blood and gore. Visually and aurally, it is a total perverse turn-on. Our hero hears the noise and goes to investigate. The witch seduces him, feigning to be innocent and injured. Back at his place, the lovemaking begins. Just as the vampire is about to chomp our hero, the spirit who saved him earlier returns. These two beauties battle it out with some super kungfu and, as with any happy fable, good is triumphant over evil. Or is it?

The final segment is a story of treachery and revenge between a husband and wife. The pretty young wife runs a restaurant with her older, impotent husband. She wants a child but the old man can't deliver, having to drink a concoction made of fresh killed turtle's blood that is supposed to make his erection strong [!]. They take in a handyman to help with the work who gives the sexy wife what she is wanting. When the old man finds out what has happened, he plots his revenge with double dealing handyman.

The plot has many twists and there is lots of sex; some hot, some grotesque, and some a combination of both. Don't watch this alone; watch it with someone you love. The discussion will be fun after viewing *Amazing Stories*.

LIVING DEAD IN TOKYO BAY

1992

Directed by Shigeru Izumiya

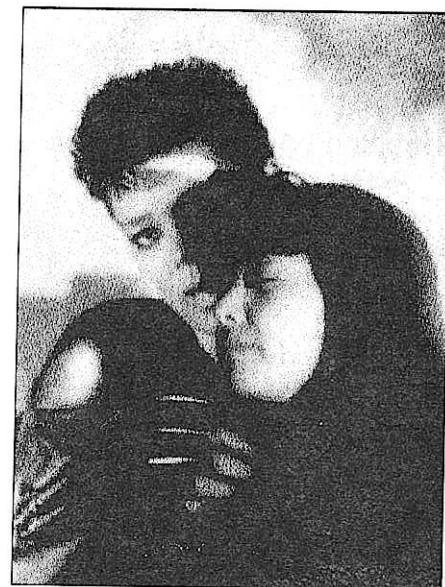
Reviewed by Tim Merrill

With a name like *Living Dead In Tokyo Bay* I was expecting a splatterfest like those classic Italian films like, *Gates Of Hell*, or *Zombie*, but this was something different. Director Shigeru Izumiya who directed the extra-trippy film, *Death Powder*, takes a total comic book approach this time to the zombie genre. A meteor enters the Earth's atmosphere, and crash lands in Tokyo bay releasing toxic fumes that contaminates the citizens, and brings the dead back to life.

The main character is the daughter of one of the heads of military, who is sent on a mission by her father to save the civilians trapped in the small communities ravaged by zombies. This chick ain't no helpless damsel in distress, and dressed in blades and leather she goes out and majorly kick some zombie ass. She winds up running into a gang of renegade punk rockers riding around in a school bus scavenging weapons and food. Soon they all become aware of an evil plan by General Kiriara to create an army of super zombie soldier to help him take over Toyko and the World.

The World Izumiya creates is like a combination of James Bond, *Mad Max*, and *The Terminator* all rolled up into one. I can't say I haven't seen any of this before, but Izumiya makes the World so damn interesting, and fun. This is like a comic book come to life, and you really don't need to know all the plot background and such, you just go with it.

Most people I know really have a problem when it comes to watching zombie



flicks and complain that they are either too gory or too stupid. Well one of my own cardinal rules for zombie films, right back to Romero's, *Night Of The Living Dead*, is that lots of people have to die, and the blood has to flow in generous amounts. Well, lots of people bite it in this one, but the gore content is kept to a minimum.

I kept thinking about the monster movies of the 50's where people came down with some funky space virus that messes them up real bad. There's something about the way Shigeru Izumiya sets up his films that opens them up to a wide audience. You've got gun toting zombies, road warrior punks in a school bus, cute chicks that kick booty, and know how to carry a blade, and an evil oppressive military dictator.

It may not sound like a hell of a lot, but Izumiya definitely has the skills and imagination to stretch the film into a neat little two hour blast. This film is definitely recommended to anyone who is into the sci-fi drive in films of the 50's and 60's and is a worthy tribute to those wacky films that were always more fiction than science.

LADY POISON

1994

Directed by Kazuya Konaka
Reviewed by Scott Williams

I have absolutely no idea what this movie is supposed to be about. I think I may have told you this before about other films -- *Atrocity* (ATC #9) comes to mind -- and this time it is just as true. I watched it three times to try and find some hidden subtext...hell, I would have settled for some actual text but to no avail. But I will pass on what I think I know.

Lady Poison begins promising enough with some cool camera shots (almost noirish at times), a cool soundtrack, cool editing, and a cool title character. So far, so cool. Yuka Miroku (*Lady Poison* herself) is a photographer. Best known for her work in utensils...yes, I mean forks, spoons and other silverware, she also seems to have a fetish for killing and photographing the results. Or does she? We are led to believe that Yuka (played by Michiko Mayumi) enjoys looking at things as opposed to being looked at. Huh? What does this have to do with stabbing people in the throat?

Anyway, next we meet Sogabe (Ren Osugi) who is a mystery writer who does not believe that when life ends, death begins. Nope, no simple philosophy for our guy, he believes that when life ends, death ends. Pretty deep. He also has fetishes of his own -- latex, bondage, S&M, B&D, plus the usual sex, lies and videotape.

And now, introducing who I believe is the hero of the story -- Rinbun aka Michifumi (Yasunori Murata). He appears to be a photographer's assistant's assistant. And a pretty well-to-do one at that because he has tons of photographic and

surveillance equipment (including some high-tech bugging device so he can listen to Yuka cut roses.) So the cute little newcomer gets a crush on our cute little bad girl without a hint of what he is getting himself into. Not, that is, until he spies on her looking at slides of what is presumably one of her kills. Except it kinda looked to me like she was doctoring a photo of a guy in a bathtub to look like a guy in a bathtub with his throat cut. Did she or didn't she? So far the almost-eeriness has kept me going. (I kept thinking I should be listening to Portishead while I watched though the soundtrack of some ethereal female vocals over a standard drum machine was still pretty good. Anyway, I digress...)

Now, for some strange reason, this is all supposed to be tied together by a pair of detectives who are on the case of one of these murders. This evolves into a tale of banned photos on the internet and the street trade of selling such goods. (Goods meaning photos of sex in public, Lolita-esque photos, scatology and real murders. One choice on the internet binary file menu puzzled me however as it was labeled "Fool." Made me wonder how Newt got his photos circulated on the Japanese underground...) For the entire film these guys run around, never really finding anything out and with one always complaining about how he hates the job and how his stomach medicine affects his sexual prowess. And, by the way, the detectives are apparently gay and lovers. But for why, I have no idea. I mean, I know it's supposed to be some chromosomal thing, I mean why they are gay in the film...it has no bearing on anything. But then not much does.

Okay, so we have some killing (not-too-graphic), some sex (also not-too-graphic but sleazy nonetheless...in fact, Sogabe goes on about some male animal in South America or somewhere that fucks his mate in the stomach as opposed to



the vagina and how that makes that animal the ultimate male), and a lot of intercuts to make us think all of this has something to do with something. But does it?

So let's review, shall we? Yuka is kind of a sick puppy but then so is Sogabe. Rinbun is also disturbed but more in a voyeuristic way and somebody has to be the good guy. Someone is doing some killing and a couple guys that sleep together have absolutely no clue as to whom. Oh, yeah, there's also this great cocktail waitress in this sex club who wears a gas mask. Odd characters and atmosphere aplenty. Cohesive story...well, no. But thanks for playing.

I don't want to ruin the ending so if vague gloomy thrillers are your thing...you will love this. Even as I tell you about the movie I have the feeling that I could tell you everything and still not explain a thing. I mean, I did sit through it three times (as of this writing) so I guess that's kinda cool in its own way. I don't know...maybe not. Hey! Maybe *Atrocity* will make more sense now.

THE CRUEL KIND

1990

Directed by Ku Wai Ching
Reviewed by Mike Plante

The Cruel Kind the title refers to is one of two things: those who are cruel to others or those who THINK they are cruel. No, it doesn't make sense to me, either. But the film is obviously influenced by the type of film you might see in European Trash Cinema. So much that the HK film was shot entirely in Paris. Hitchcock and Polanski are also referenced: voyeurism, photography, surreal dreams, and knives make up the style.

And style is the main thing the film has going for it. Director Ku Wai Ching imitates the euro-thriller genre in look and plot. Chang Kuo Cu plays an erotic photographer who is continually running into a mysterious chinese girl (played nicely by Shi Kai) who he thinks is dead. The apparent ghost continues to follow/haunt him to the point where he is not sure what is real anymore. Visions of hardcore lesbian sex 'taunts' him. Although, interestingly enough, his dream have all the hardcore shots edited out! He pushes on, but can't tell his American girlfriend what's going on. Meanwhile, real hookers are being killed.

So he paints the ghost to try to get rid of her. Good try, except the painting's eyes bleed. OK, alright, just throw the painting out. Now photos of the painting show up wherever a hooker is killed. Then the painting shows up on his front doorstep. Is he the killer or is it all a dream? Is the ghost real or imagined, good or bad? Is the painting now collectable?

In what appears to be an interesting plot with twists, unfortunately you also see what is really happening and who is responsible. While the surface story is good, the subplot seems like another



movie. The style disappears and pure schlock value answers the questions before they're even asked. The lack of surprises brings the film to a dull and predictable ending. Reaching the lowest points, it actually tries to pull off a shower scene murder.

On the whole, the photographer's visions make for an interesting watch, especially if you're a fan of the "euro-thriller". The style and effects keep in contact with those influences. The only real link with the typical Hong Kong film is the ghost, this time sans wires and mile-long tongues.

FATAL LOVE

1995

Directed by Chan Chi Suen

Reviewed by Max Allan Collins

A skillful and disturbing slice of Asian-trash filmmaking, *Fatal Love* is a psychological thriller that edges into horror.

Several genres are spliced together here, keeping the viewer (and the film's central character) off-balance. Are we watching a love story? A cop melodrama? A serial killer saga? This is a film with no American counterpart; no stateside filmmaker would think of, let alone dare, combining a light comic romance with a dark tragic melodrama. Think of it as "When Hannibal Lecter Met Sally..."

Fatal Love begins as a police-procedural tale of rookie Debbie Fung (portrayed by a luminously lovely Ellen Chan) getting thrown out of the academy when she's framed by a jealous classmate. Her spunky retaliation against that classmate gets her a second chance -- as an undercover cop. We witness her training in straightforward police-story style, complete with comic relief; nothing indicates either Debbie or the viewer is in for a rough ride.

Debbie is assigned to get next to Law Fuk Tin (portrayed appealingly by Michael Wong), handsome young billionaire whose fortune may have been made in drug trafficking, among other illegal doings. But Debbie isn't going undercover to take down a drug kingpin: Law is also suspected of numerous brutal slayings of young women and it is this case Debbie is tackling.

And now begins a dance of deception that will whipshaw Debbie and the viewer throughout the picture. She and her prey "meet cute" on the golf course and boy-girl banter and sweetly romantic scenes (with occasional dark undercurrents, as when Law excites and scares her with his fast driving) seduce us into thinking we're watching a light comedy.

The romance occurs in daylight scenes. At night, when Debbie is skulking around the house seeking evidence, she witnesses some rough sado-sex, though it's unclear whether it's Law or one of his men performing these brutal acts. Either way, it signals a troubling sub-strata in her charming host's world. Before long,

Debbie's cover is blown and she is pulled off the case; only soon Law is pursuing her, romantically, with flowers and his undeniable charisma.

By now we know Law really is a drug trafficker and capable of violence, at least in his own world; what is unclear is whether he's that (fairly typical) breed of gangster who can compartmentalize his business life and private life. Dispatching a rival gangster or killing a betrayer among his men (with a golf club) doesn't necessarily mean he's faking his love for Debbie...does it?

Director Chan Chi Suen's subject is deception, yet he is honest in his presentation. He alternates the light romantic scenes with shockingly violent sequences, and it's almost as if we're watching two very different movies...but we're not. If we believe only what we prefer to believe, then we're as naive as rookie-cop Debbie.



Ellen Chan

As extreme as the violence in *Fatal Love* is, it is not ever-present; this is not a gorefest but a thoughtful film, extremely well-made -- its fluid camera work distinguished from speaker to speaker. A number of set pieces stand out a strikingly good slices of filmmaking: Law defending himself heroically against a group of attackers; the steamy, sweaty sex scene that makes any similar scene in an American "erotic thriller" seem laughable.

But until its final frames, *Fatal Love* doesn't reveal whether its heart is one of darkness or light...or a schizoid combination.

BLACK MAGIC WITH BUTCHERY

1989

Directed by Lo Lieh

Reviewed by John Dodd

Horror:

1) Originally --

a) a bristling, b) a shuddering;

2) A painful emotion of fear, dread and abhorrence; a shuddering with terror and loathing; a feeling caused by something frightful and shocking;

3) A strong dislike or aversion; loathing;

4) The quality causing horror;

5) That which excites fear, loathing or dread; something that causes intense mental aversion or positive suffering;

6) Something very ugly, bad, disagreeable.

-- Webster's New 20th Century Dictionary,
Second Edition

A young man, Ben, and a priest violate a mummy's tomb and steal its brain. The priest dies in a cave-in but tells Ben that

he can wish on the brain for anything he wants. But warns that the brain must be immediately destroyed with holy water.

Ben returns to Hong Kong where the first strange things happens. At Customs, the agent looks inside the box holding the brain but sees nothing there. Seconds later, Ben checks the box and the brain is safe and sound.

Ben is engaged to marry Annie but is concerned about lack of money. Ben prays to the brain for financial success. The brain grants the wish. But instead of destroying the brain, Ben keeps praying for a variety of wishes to the brain.

Annie's father is sick and looking for someone to take over his business. Ben has bright ideas about gold. But Annie's brother, Kit, scoffs at the idea. Ben prays that his enemies will be taught not to scoff at him. It doesn't take a brain surgeon (excuse the pun) to figure out what's going to happen next.

The film continues through most of its running time with a variety of "weird" things happening. A dead monkey and dog are discovered. Family members begin to see the brain in the refrigerator. Annie develops a weird fixation (possession?) with a "God of Four Faces" statue.

Finally, Ben wakes up and tries to destroy the brain. But by this time the holy water is gone and Ben must look to other (non-effective) methods of destruction.

What I just described to you is roughly an hour of the film's running time...it feels much longer than that.

Some have argued that this film was some kind of tribute to H.G. Lewis and those 50's sci-fi brain movies. Maybe, but that is no excuse for making a boring film. The pacing in this thing is terrible.

Nothing happens in the first half-hour. Then there's a so-so murder which seems nothing more than a futile attempt to rouse the snoozing audience. Then it's back to the mundane and goofy for another half-hour.

Some attempt is made to pay off in the finale however. Man and brain become one in a blood-spewing metamorphosis scene. The product of the merging looks neat at first but less convincing the more the audience sees of it. But the big problem is not the FX. It's that the mutation doesn't do anything. He runs around and frightens Annie. That's about it.

Like the rest of the film, the climax is a lot of fussing over very little. There are a couple of priests along for comic relief who have been merged into one body and the jokes would be right at home in Steve Martin's *All Of Me*.

Skeptics might be reading this review and wondering: But what about the brain attacks? What about the body count? These are the filmmaker's biggest cheat: four people die in the entire film (Did the father die? I watched the scene twice and am still not sure but I'll give the film the benefit of the doubt.) Any self-respecting gorehound will feel cheated by this movie and rightfully so.

Webster's Dictionary defined horror in a variety of ways. *Black Magic With Butchery* fits a couple of the definitions. It is very bad and certainly causes loathing in the viewer. There is truly nothing to this film. There is no mood or scares. There isn't even any gratuitous martial arts fights despite the fact that the star of *Five Fingers Of Death* (Lo Lieh) directed. There is nothing, NOTHING in this film to make it worth the time it takes to watch it.

THE MEN BEHIND THE SUN

1990

Directed by He Chi-Chiang
Reviewed by Patrick Macias

When a Japanese military officer in *The Men Behind The Sun* seeks to demon-

strate the time-honored aphorism of "strength in numbers," he throws a cat into a room containing hundreds of rats. The cat fights bravely but it is no match for the mass of starved, crazed rodents. Within minutes, it is torn to shreds; its white pelt matted with blood and its carcass quickly consumed in a feeding frenzy. The incorrigible fact is that this movie scene was not faked. Beyond a shadow of a doubt, those were real rats, a real cat, and that sucker died to entertain you. Strength in numbers? OK, OK, I'm a believer.



This uncompromising vignette gives *The Men Behind The Sun* a terrible card to play. If the filmmakers will stoop to animal cruelty for a throwaway effect, then to what depths will they go for the rest of the film? The answer is straight to hell. This film is a cinematic atrocity exhibition on par with Pasolini's *Salò: The 120 Days Of Sodom* or the HK produced *The Devil's Laboratory*.

Steeped in extremity and knowing no boundaries of restraint, the events contained in this historical study of man's inhumanity to man (and cats and rats) makes a proper plot synopsis or criticism irrelevant. The best one can do is lay out the premise and the pieces.

The setting is a Japanese-run medical experiment camp in Manchuria during the final days of World War II. Top secret biological warfare experiments are being conducted by "doctors" and "scientists" who use the Manchurian prisoners of war, known as marutas, as human guinea pigs. These grim events are seen through the eyes of the 731 youth corps, who are torn between their horror at the camp's true nature and their loyalty to the Japanese empire.

The litany of war crimes on display here would make anyone pray for the relative comforts of bullets or bayonets: mass crucifixions, eviscerations performed on still-living persons, mysterious injections, poison gas, dismemberings, frozen flesh peeled right off the bones, and exposure to the aforementioned rats are but a few of the fates awaiting the helpless marutas.

While it's true that many of these misfortunes are featured in any number of films (to say nothing of real life), nothing can prepare you for the harsh, clinical precision of *The Men Behind The Sun*. A maruta is thrown into a pressurizing room. While a doctor observes coldly and takes notes, the pressure crushes the naked man to the floor until the lower end of his intestinal tract spurts out of his bowels.

By now you've probably made your judgment on the likelihood of *The Men Behind The Sun* appearing on your video shelf. It goes without saying that it is not recommended for anyone who can't stomach graphic depictions of gore and cruelty. For that margin of people who can and will endure it, the film offers the worst sort of physical and psychological

roller coaster ride, with scene after scene constantly out-doing the previous one for shock, horror and stomach-churning nausea.

Video Search of Miami offers an English-dubbed version of the film with speech performed by the same anonymous voices that populate a million chop-socky movies. While you may have laughed before as they delivered lines like "Right, meet me at the Shaolin temple then," it's doubtful that you'll get the same chuckles from dialogue like "it will be quite difficult to produce a strain of bubonic plague that is more than 60 times as infectious as the standard type."

The whirlwind of death and insanity at the 731 Camp culminates with its own destruction. After Japan has surrendered, the order goes out to destroy the camp and all evidence of its existence. Buildings are razed down, the marutas are gassed to death, and the experimental rats, now infected with the plague, are set ablaze. Resembling little Will-O-The-Wisps as they rush down the hospital corridors, the burning rats race past history, beyond cruelty, beyond realism, beyond endurance... their trajectories set in motion by *The Men Behind The Sun*.

HORROR!

"Kazuo Umezu's Terror Zone"

1993

Directed by Hikari Hayakawa

Reviewed by John Crawford

These are the facts, as I know them: two short films, one in B&W, both written by Kazuo Umezu and directed by Hikari Hayakawa, subtitles by Mr. & Mrs. Weissner. Period. Anything else appearing factual that you will read here is totally



speculative, except, of course, any critical evaluations.

A segment of Kazuo Umezu's *Terror Zone*, **HORROR!** is an anthology film that consists of two short stories by Mr. Umezu. In Hollywood, author Umezu would be called a 'name above the title' writer much like the ever popular Stephen King. Director Hayakawa has a stylistic holiday as he handles each of the stories in very different ways. The widescreen cinematography is excellent in both short films. Blended with crisp editing and a haunting soundtrack, the final product is a very frightening experience. A line of dialogue from the second film, "A beautiful girl always has a dark side" is the basic premise of both works.

Return to Darkness is the first of the two short films [this is a fact also]. A young woman named Junko travels to the country home of her husband by an arranged marriage. 'Country home' is an understatement. This mountain village is so remote that it is faster to walk through the forest than to drive the road! When she

arrives, she meets a strange old man. Her spouse shows her around her new home, including the very mysterious "sealed room" that has monsters inside.

Troubled by bad dreams and paranoid of the hidden monsters, the young woman has a bad night when her secretive husband leaves on a business trip. In beautiful B&W, Director Hayakawa is very conscious of his frame compositions. He does an excellent job capturing the laid back country life style, while hinting at the evil lurking beneath the surface.

Stolen Heart is the second story. Starring Ayako Sugiyama and Yumiko Takahashi in the featured roles, this story of two young girls exchanging hearts apparently has created quite a fuss in Japan. One girl, Hitomi, has some kind of heart disease and must take it easy. One day, she experiences shortness of breath and her good friend, Takako, tries to comfort her, saying that if necessary she would give up her heart to help her friend.

On holiday at the seashore, the friend playfully spooks Hitomi and she winds up in the hospital needing a transplant. Now Takako is feeling guilty about her promise, wishing she had never made it. Since the two friends share the same blood type, the hospital wants her to donate some for the operation.

In her anguish, Takako is accidentally injured and declared brain dead, allowing the heart transplant to occur. The sickly girl, Hitomi, recovers to live a healthy and normal life. Until...well, I don't want to give it away. You should see for yourself!

ASIAN TRASH

CINEMA

**Dedicated To The Art
Of Action And
Exploitation**

POSSESSED 2

1990

Directed by David Lai

Reviewed by Tim Merrill

When I first started reviewing films for ATC I was ready for the unexpected, but nothing could prepare me for anything like this. *Possessed 2*, has to be the funniest, cheekiest, most outrageous film I have ever had the pleasure of viewing. Don't get me wrong here, I'm not dicing this film at all, in fact I think it's a classic. Where else would you find African warriors screwed and chewed in a public zoo, dissolving faces with acid, Hare Krishna Exorcists, mutating breasts, women turning into werewolves, possessed kung fu chicks in bondage, severed arms shooting guns, burning children's corpses, possessed toddlers, and psychotic owls? For



awhile I had to remind myself that I wasn't having another flashback by the time the film ended.

All this insanity is tied together by a street cop and his family moving into a haunted flat. The flat is possessed by the evil spirit of a jilted war bride who committed suicide by jumping from the balcony, only to be eaten by dogs. As the family moves in, the spirit does her best to cause them to leave. The family loses a baby on the way as the ghost throws the cop's wife down the stairs. Soon the young daughter of the officer becomes possessed, and chases the school yard bully around the school, hovering in the air and sprouting fangs. I can guarantee that you'll be on the floor in total laughter, at the film's serious attempts to be terrifying.

The content of the film seems to show that it was filmed in the late 70's, early 80's, so it seems to lose a lot of it's scare content due to being dated, but I can guarantee that it will still freak the shit out of you. The film is a mishmash of the supernatural of *Poltergeist*, the comedy of *Charlie Chaplin*, and a dash of *All My Children*. Our hero is dissatisfied with his wife, and goes looking for play elsewhere. Little does he know that his wife soon turns into a ravenous she-beast who goes out looking for a little fresh meat of her own, literally.

Soon it becomes plainly obvious to our hero that his wife is suffering from more than a little bit of pms, and he calls on the services of the landlord to exorcise the demons from his other half. This is totally when the fun begins. All hell breaks loose as our valiant heroes are tossed through doors, hit with tables, and pelted with Mah Jong pieces. Just when you think it couldn't get any wackier, the cop goes to a Hair Krishna priest to rid his wife of the demons. Out of nowhere the Krishna priest comes up with a laboratory, and containment unit to trap and capture the evil spirit. Needless to say, if you've ever

been hassled by Krishnas at airports, you'll love what happens here!

This film almost goes below the realms of your standard B movie, by throwing everything at you, often for no reason at all, and barely hanging on by a totally outrageous plot line, but that's what makes this film so kinetic, and an absolute howl. I guarantee that after a few beers, and a few other substances, your eyes will be popping out of your sockets at the hilarious insanity that ensues all throughout *Possessed 2*.

WE ARE GOING TO EAT YOU

1983

**Directed by Tsui Hark
Reviewed by Brick Reno**

Deep in the jungle, two farmers travel to take chickens to market. Unfortunately, they are viciously murdered by cleaver-wielding stormtroopers and carted off. This seems like your average "What the fuck is going on?" prologue until you remember the title of this movie is *We Are Going To Eat You*. The farmers become both, guests of honor and the main course at a feast fit for Hannibal Lecter.

Dashing secret agent 999 of the Central Security Agency enjoys a water taxi ride on a make-shift raft and trades oneliners with a petty thief. He explains his mission, to capture a famous criminal in a remote village named "Rolex." On the outskirts of town, 999 gets strung up in a trap and has his wallet stolen by the thief. While suspended in midair, our hero is attacked from all sides by a swarm of leatherfaced butchers. Just when you think soup's on, he escapes. The slapstick and gore move at a nice clip during the first reel of this slasher/adventure/comedy.



The thief enters town and is drawn into the lair of what I assume is a horny, drag queen giant. Her appetite for sex is ravenous, she chases him around her hut looking for L'amour. Feed me Seymour, feed me all night long. Being quite resourceful, the thief bits her ear off to escape. Meanwhile, 999 attempts to report being attacked to a couple of chop licking townspeople, "Fresh meat." one of them gurgles. This guy rules; not only does he kick ass in the most delightful way, but he manages to roll a cigarette on one of their foreheads. The fracas is interrupted by villain number one, referred to as Chief.

Chief's job is to dole out rations of human flesh and strike fear into the hearts of the villagers. Not understanding that he's lunch, lunch, baby; 999 asks Chief about the elusive "Rolex". Chief says he's heard of "Rolex" but hasn't seen him for ages. Claiming to be busy, Chief can't offer assistance in the search.

Wearing amusing, yum yum eat 'em up grins, the good townspeople escort 999 to

the Temple of Heaven Sea, a slaughterhouse/holy place, and like clockwork, he's bum rushed by ten or twelve utensil swinging madmen. The martial arts sequences have started to get a bit repetitious and the mind starts to drift. Thinking that 999 doesn't exactly roll off the tongue, I decided to dub him "Dances with weapons". 999 almost gets whacked by Chief and an aide, who later reveals the town's deep, dark secret: They eat people!

After a few dragass scenes, including 999 finding a love interest, the thief is chased by townspeople with butterfly nets, a family eats noses and rice; the aide rambles something about a revolution and enlists the thief as his comic relief tagalong. The aide's revolution consists of whacking the Chief and changing his diet. The fight between the aide and Chief is cute and if you squint your eyes, it's not hard to imagine Freddy Prinze vs. Che Guevara in a pay per view exclusive.

The climax, like the rest of the film, is ambitious in that it tries to incorporate what works from many different genres. Hark's juggling act teeters but ultimately works. If your turn ons include: spinning cameras, severed limbs and wild anarchic humor, *We Are Going To Eat You* is worth a look.

MYSTICS IN BALI

1989

**Directed by H. Tjut Djalil
Reviewed by Daniel Grissom**

"And now, I'm going to have to borrow your head for awhile..." And off goes the girl's disembodied head to search the countryside for fresh fetuses to feed upon. Anyone seeing the clip of this film on the VSOM sampler tape must have

had quite a time trying to figure out what demented foreign mind created this craziness. After watching this movie three times so far, I'm still a little shocked and dumfounded by parts of it.

The story concerns an American writer named Kathy who has come to Bali to finish a book on black magic. Seems the most primitive, and most powerful, form of magic is the Leak, which is practiced by mystics in the forests of Bali.

Kathy, with the help of a swinging Indonesian stud named Myhendra (?), comes under the tutelage of one very wicked and evil Leak master. The master has taken Kathy on as her student in order to use her and become the most powerful Leak magician. During her training, Kathy learns magical mantras, Leak dances, how to turn into a pig and the fabulous Leak laugh. (Leak masters are BIG on laughing.)

Naturally, Kathy and Myhendra fall in love with each other. However, when the master begins magically removing Kathy's head and using it to find fresh human fetuses, their relationship gets a bit rocky.

The special effects are wonderfully campy -- as you see Kathy's head racing through the countryside with most of her vital organs dangling below it! Also great is the image of Kathy's head between the legs of some poor woman in labor. Her head literally sucks the baby from the womb! Well, as all this nocturnal nuttiness begins to affect Kathy's day life (her head loses her body for awhile), it's up to Myhendra and his uncles to save her...and the world. All of this eventually leads to an awesome final showdown between good and evil.

This Indonesian film by H. Tjut Djalil was made in the late 80's but it doesn't look like it. The version I saw was dubbed and although the readings were horribly wooden, this did not hinder my enjoyment of the film at all. The dialogue is written on a fourth grade level and you can just

forget about character development. (The film jumps right into the plot at the outset.) But the actors are fun, especially Myhendra and his array of 70's American t-shirts. (My fave is his baby blue Property Of Notre Dame shirt.)

Overall this is my favorite Indonesian film (also the only one I've seen) and is probably best enjoyed with a group of friends and some alcohol. Guaranteed to bring you a little closer to the meaning of existence than anything Kevin Costner could create.

BATTLE IN HELL

1989

Directed by Wen Hua
Reviewed by Frank Kilzer

Battle In Hell starts off with some action on horseback in the late 14th century. The Chinese army is completing a great victory. Even now their cavalry is closing in to finish off the Mongol general's remaining men. Within view of the fighting, General Kim's oldest daughter, Chin-Lin, has watched the rout and goes to find her sister and mother. Not far is sister Yin-Lin with her beau, Don. They have been romancing in the long grass when Chin brings them the news. (No reason Don should go fight for her father I guess.) Kim is spared but he and his family take poison rather than return home in defeat. Yin is reluctant because of her love for Don (wherever he disappeared to) but does so anyway. Fade out.

No, this is not the start of an action-packed medieval picture. *Battle In Hell* now jumps six hundred years to present day Hong Kong. General Kim's family are walking ghosts and some of them have started a murder spree. Two young plain clothes HK cops, Danny and David, are

on the case. Both are sure that spirits have done these killings and Danny goes off to a "known" haunted house. Entering this very modern-looking home, Danny walks into a bedroom where the ghost of Yin-Lin is waiting. It seems that Danny is a dead ringer for her lover of six centuries ago. She doesn't tell him the truth -- that he's really her lover reincarnated -- and both of them hit it off. They continue to see each other and on a later evening they take a drive into the city and over to his place for a PG love scene.

Well, it turns out that the whole family of General Kim also lives in the house. Mom and Dad are wearing up-to-date clothing when they go a-haunting. There is another spook with them, sort of a powerful ghost cop named Bobby, who wants to wed Yin. He can sense that Danny/Don has been getting it on with her. Of course he's pissed and after a brief fight, Danny is saved only by Yin-Lin's promise to marry Bobby.



This is pretty much the photoplay of a very ordinary story of love between a human male and a sometimes not-so-undead woman. *Battle In Hell* has a few small subplots in attempt to fill time. There are the usual "special" effects of flying ghosts, lots of little explosions with fire, and colored animated energy bolts. (At least there wasn't a know-it-all priest casting spells on paper.) Also present is the blue backlit fog effect in an attempt to give the viewer the creeps in the night scenes.

Fans of both Hong Kong horror and romance cinema can easily recommend much more interesting fare. I know putting the movie in the current time frame saves a lot in the budget department but *Battle In Hell* could have been much better set in the past (fighting with swords and horses as in the opening) or maybe even well into the future (as a decent sci-fi pic) but mainly it needed something that would set it apart from similar films of the genre.

It doesn't take much foresight to know how the film turns out. For none of the acting, directing, or action scenes stand out. Early on a few lecherous males get wasted by Chin-Lin but there is little graphic horror and zero on any unclad spirits. The evil ghosts are beaten as always and the two lovers, knowing they can't stay together, swear to seek each other out in the next life. Then it just ends.

In the next issue of ATC:

An interview with Bill and Karen Palmer and Ric Meyers, co-authors of *The Encyclopedia of Martial Arts Movies*, plus a focus on several of our favorite Asian directors!!

Don't Miss It!!

GAMERA:

Guardian Of The Universe

1995

Directed by Shusuke Kaneko

Reviewed by Brick Reno

This ain't your father's monster movie. Actually, it is; the film has all the cheese ball elements characteristic of the genre with plenty of nineties bells and whistles that make it an interesting viewing experience. You do not have to be familiar with any back history of the series, which started in 1966, since the film is basically a remake of the first one.

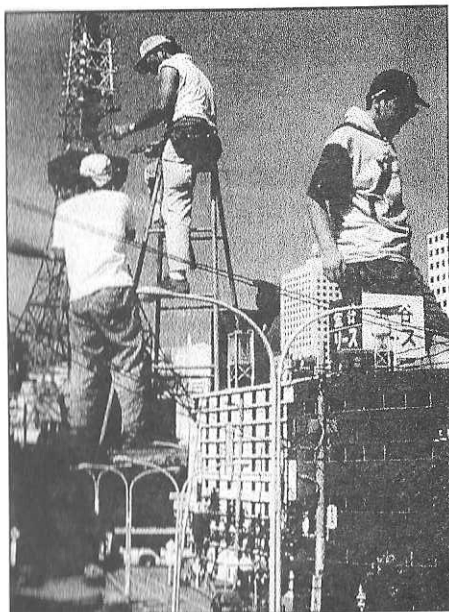
The story opens with a military cruiser "somewhere in the Pacific." Japanese naval officers, including the film's handsome do-gooder romantic lead, seem concerned because an object, vaguely resembling "draw Tippy," has appeared



on their radar screen. Gulp. Cut to a rocking aerial attack of an elderly woman walking her dog. This sequence is shot from the attackers' point of view in sort of an Argento meets *The Birds* meets Jurassic Park-style that pleases.

A beautiful girl scientist, Asagi, discovers a pair of glasses and a fountain pen in a pile of bird shit the size of Devil's Tower. She's sad to learn that one: the stuff belongs to her mentor, and two: whatever dropped this load eats people! As her research team flies away from the village, they're attacked by the mystery birds and Asagi manages to pop off a Polaroid that will lend a clue in how to deal with what Japan is up against.

Plot-wise we've seen it all before. We know the scientists will be eager to study the unknown creatures and the military, referred to as the Self-Defense Force, will want to protect the innocent lives by wiping the creatures off the face of the Earth. The characters are totally one dimensional, a blur of lab coats and army helmets. The filmmakers could have gone the



Shusuke Kaneko (R) walks among the buildings

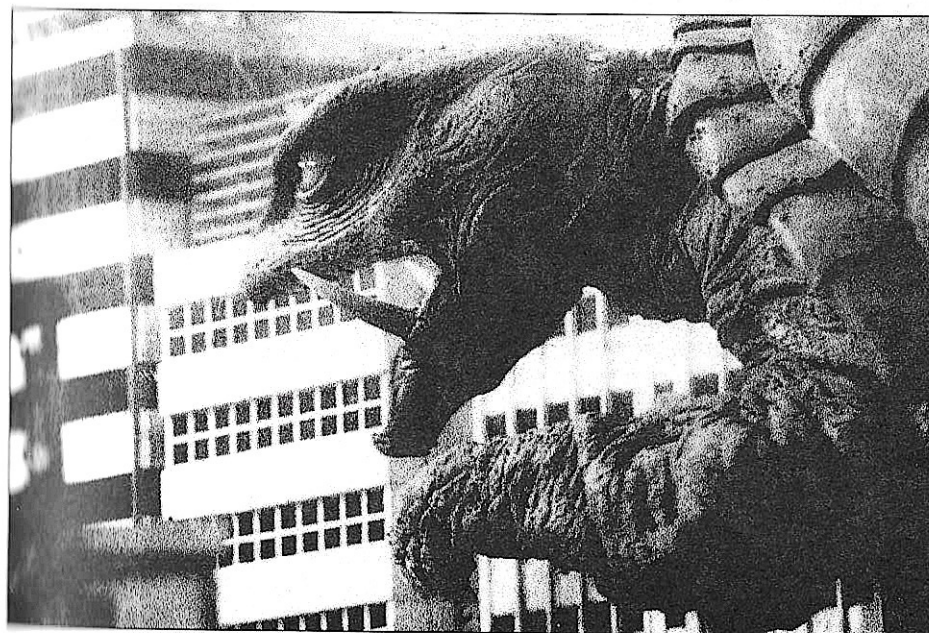
extra mile by at least trying to fake character development like they do in Spielberg flicks by giving actors cute phobias or colorful scarves. The birds are eventually discovered to be Gyaos, weird creatures engineered by a lost civilization not unlike Atlantis, except for the fact that they sank into the Pacific.

Next, a drifting atoll reaches landfall and viola! It's Gamera! He's heading for the same ballpark that the Gyaos are drawn to by the military, who have put animal carcasses on first, second and third. It's enjoyable to watch Gamera stroll to the stadium, people run and scream on the subway (recalling recent headlines of poison gas attacks), buildings topple and people are squashed. I like the whole retro style of filming a guy in a rubber suit running around smashing stuff. It's much more fun to watch than say, a giant Mick Jagger shimmying through Manhattan while a giant Keith Richards strokes his guitar neck. The filmmakers have the technology to do something slick but stick with tradition. I

assumed Gamera was drawn to the stadium by a primal urge to get laid because, from a distance, the stadium looks just like him. Instead, it's clear that he's getting ready to rumble with the Gyaos, toe to toe in Tokyo.

Before he's made his way across the parking lot, the army ground forces "Bonnie and Clyde" two of the three Gyaos as all hell breaks loose. The third tries to make a break for it and narrowly escapes the closing retractable roof. Action like this and what follows would bring fans back to baseball.

Stick with this movie...sit through the slow parts, exposition scenes, news broadcasts of destruction and mayhem, basically anything with humans. Forget the environmental love duet by Don Henley and Sting (just kidding), and wait for the inevitable climax. You'll see cool missiles knock Gamera over, exploding oil refineries, Gyaos slice and dice using laser breath with pinpoint accuracy, and hand to hand combat while orbiting the Earth.



PITUITARY HUNTER

1990

Directed by Pan Tan
Reviewed by Steve Sanders

Starring: Lau Kwong, Wedy Leung, Kwok Fung, Daisy Cheung

Any movie with a crazed killer dwarf is good movie. And that's why I liked Pituitary Hunter. It's got one hell of a killer midget.

I apologize for giving away the plot, but with Pituitary Hunter the mystery of who is ripping out the pituitary glands of the dead, and then later of the living, is really secondary. The real reason for watching this film is for its schlocky goodness.

Right from the start, you know Pituitary Hunter is going to be great. Cheesy music and weird 70's style credits start, and soon we get to see a crazed midget eating a dead rabbit. You just can't get a finer opening than that.

Before I get off track, here's the story in a nutshell: Someone is stealing the pituitary glands of the dead at a local hospital. Soon people start turning up dead with their glands gone. The police investigate. Is it the local doctor who appears is your nice quiet good guy with something just askew? Since he is really the only suspect we see through most of the film, you have to stick him up there on the list. The fact he lives with his blind wife and daughter, the latter who is suffering from some sort of weird problem that causes her not to grow, also makes him just a bit suspicious. Later we learn he's good friends with a nasty little dwarf. Throw in a side plot involving abortion and love, and you've got this mess of a plot.

But it's a fine mess and chugs along in this twisted fun way. The subtitled helps maintain the fun. It makes enough sense, (Let's start the investigate) but is just

somehow off (Be hurry!). All the characters seem to have walked out of stock schlock films. The cops are honorable but bumbling, the doctor honest and caring, and the dwarf freakish and cruel. He's also tormented by other people and the scene where mean children throw him in the trash has to be seen to be appreciated. He's a great character. Evil, bitter, and childish. He cries when beat up, and in a beautiful scene, attacks a Sylvester Stallone poster because he is sick of being short! You'll rewind the tape at the point to see it again and again.

There's also enough nudity to keep you one-handers busy, but it has this weird cheap porno feel to it. The only thing missing is some guitar going "wakka wakka wakka" in the background. Just seemed dirty somehow.

If you like them so-bad-they're-good this is a must see. I'm afraid I'm not doing it justice with this review. You have to see it to believe it. So see it.

A BITE OF LOVE

aka One Bite O.K.

1990

Directed by Stephen Shin
Reviewed by John Crawford

As a young person exploring the world of cinema, two of my first genre fetishes were Hammer gothic horror films and Shaw Bros. kung fu movies. For years I thought that *The Legend of the 7 Golden Vampires* was the greatest movie ever made. I got goose-pimples watching David Chiang and Peter Cushing track the evil Dracula across the great sets of the Shaw Bros. back lot. My one lament was that Christopher Lee chose not to appear in the film, a minor flaw in an otherwise fantastic movie.

Rosamund Kwan



Nowadays I still love a good vampire story. *A Bite of Love* is such a story. This Hong Kong film combines European vampire lore with only a few elements of the Eastern folklore prevalent in the "hopping vampire" films of recent years. Played mostly for laughs, this is a modern-day story about the very elegant and refined Duke Lee who finds attacking human victims distasteful. He must rely on his manservant to supply him with sustenance from alternative sources, which is difficult considering the Duke's financial troubles. George Lam Chi-Cheung gives a wonderful performance in the role of the aging bloodsucker. He gives the character grace and dignity as well as viciousness and cunning, quite a charming fellow.

My favorite Hong Kong actress, Rosamund Kwan Chi-Lam, co-stars in *A Bite of Love*. I cannot say enough about this wonderful performer whom most Western filmgoers know as "Aunt Yee" in Tsui Hark's *Once Upon A Time in China* series. She stars here as the sister of a dying triad boss who discovers the healing properties of the Duke's blood. A transfusion will make him well, but there is a catch. The Boss turns into a vampire

as well. Kwan Chi-Lam's character was born at a special moment which makes her blood the most potent of all to the king of the vampires. This, of course, is the major plot device in the final sequence of the film. Her star quality shines through in this role.

Produced and directed by Stephen Shin, the vampire tale moves along with many funny bits of business thrown in. Shin is the producer who gave us *Black Cat*, *Black Cat 2*, and the great *Sam the Iron Bridge*. One funny bit involves a young Chinese boy in distress who is ripped off by a twenty-something Englishman. Another very funny bit involves the Duke and his servant choosing wardrobe for an evening out, trying on various wigs and capes. There is one sequence involving Ms. Kwan and a "Van Helsing" type character as they try to determine if she has been infected by the vampire's bite. Even the dreaded HIV is mentioned when the Duke has a bad reaction to some blood.

Not all tongue in cheek, Director Shin serves up some genuinely scary moments. Drawing from the Hammer horror films of the early 70's, Shin recreates the spooky atmosphere that pervades those great films. When the triad boss becomes a powerful vampire, his final battle with the Duke for ultimate evil power is really frightening.

DIE HARD ANGELS

1993

Directed by Arthur Mitsuga Sawada
Reviewed by Tim Merrill

If you remember the 70's TV show, *Charlie's Angels*, then you'll remember the team of three cuties guided by Charlie in a constant fight against crime. Well for-

get Farrah Fawcett and Kate Jackson, because now we've got seven angels that would kick Charlie's butt, and then some.

After watching *Die Hard Angels*, I felt like I had seen an episode of a long lost Asian TV series. It's basically the story of a crack team of seven cuties each with their own skills, brought together to break up a secret evil organization elaborately called, 'The Group'.

This time the seven angels are brought together to deal with the resurrection of the evil fiends known as, 'Zombie Man', and 'Zombie Woman'. Mr. and Ms. Zombie aren't your usual undead couple. If it wasn't for the fact that they walk really slow, you wouldn't know they were any different from any of the other characters in the film. I have an imagination, and can deal with the situation of having a limited budget for a movie, but this is ridiculous.

If Ed Wood had directed an episode of, *Beverly Hills 90210*, instead of, *Plan From Outer Space*, *Die Hard Angels*, would probably be the result. Despite everything, there are some classic lines in this film. After *Zombie Woman* warns the angels to stay away because she doesn't want to see them hurt, one of the girls replies, "I've never heard of a peace loving zombie before." Apparently the reason for the resurrection of Mr. and Ms. Undead is due to some super steroid created by 'The Group', to bring the dead back to life, and give them the strength of a tank. It's a hoot to see *Zombie Man* lumber around like a drunken Frankenstein twisting heads, and breaking bones. The girls manage to infiltrate the secret lair of, 'The Group', and take care of *Zombie Man*, and *Zombie Woman*.

The way this film is set up, it's almost as if it has been edited together from various parts of other films of the seven angels. We've got frolicking on the beach, that goes to a bit of soft core sex, and winds up unintentionally being a Charlie's Angels spoof. While this wasn't one of the

worst films I have ever seen, I could see where some major improvements could have definitely took place. You can't make a movie just by the fact that you have cute chicks in it. There has to be a solid plot, and not just a cheap reason just to kill people, or show a bit of t&a. I think fans of Asian films come to expect a lot more than this.

There's a lot of people I'm certain that will enjoy *Die Hard Angels* with the frolicking young vixens, but I was one who kept waiting for a good solid action punch, and it's not that kind of movie.

MY CRAZY LOVE FOR YOU

1993

Directed by Tao Ten Hong
Reviewed by Mike Plante

In this country, we're thrilled if our favorite director or star makes 4 or 5 films every year. De Niro does a couple things, Brando's over the hill. Kubrick needs 6 years to find a project. Then we come to Hong Kong. Even workhorse Gene Hackman has nothing on Simon Yam.

Yam wakes up in the morning, finishes a film, then eats breakfast. John Woo's producer Terence Cheng has stated that they need to get everything they can out of actors because they're only on the set for a few hours a day. Actors could work on as many as 5 films at a time! In the past 2 months, I've seen 5 new Yam videos, and read about 3 more films in the theaters. He's been a killer, triad, triad-turned-teacher, cop, undercover cop, future cop, and car racer. I hope I'm not understating this.

If this seems like too much, I'm afraid it is. Even though many of the roles are similar, it's looking like the act is getting worse. I really enjoy Yam in a few things, which leaves about 50 to be desired. If

you've seen it before, you've seen *My Crazy Love For You*.

Notice: the end of this paragraph tells you the ending of the movie. Yam watches a famous newscaster from afar. He's already a psycho, play-acting with a doll, dressing up like her, following her. He meets her accidentally and gets closer to her. Kills the boyfriend, she suspects him. He finally rapes her. She puts up with it until he leaves. She kills him.

In my opinion, this story has been done way too many times. A rape scene shouldn't be expected in a movie, psycho or not. I hope Yam can come to America as many other HK film personalities are, but not if this is all he has to offer. Other actors and directors will bring style and substance, some are already influencing films here. Hopefully they can move forward and not be forced to make the same movie 5 times a year.



MY NEIGHBORS ARE PHANTOMS

1989

Directed by William Chang Kee
Reviewed by Frank Kilzer

Still yet another routine ghost/sex comedy, *My Neighbors Are Phantoms*, has a few things similar to another film I review for this issue, *Battle In Hell*. Both films have a mortal male in love with a good female spirit. The phantoms live in a nice house surrounded by a constant fog. The male lead is a cop and gets help from a wise "uncle" who is a Taoist priest. The main difference between the two films is that the latter is somewhat serious and *Phantoms* was made to be silly and comical.

Spirits from the past, who in this case were once trapped in a 1930's photo-

graph, take over a house. This "family" are mostly elves and I'm not talking about the cookie kind. They need to drink the blood of 49 people in order to get their full powers back. Next door lives Dragon, a young policeman and his two meddling sisters. The sisters have been fussing about a peeping tom and when they all go to the fog-surrounded house to confront him...surprise! Here is a new family. The elves act weird but friendly at offering snacks and drinks. Both of Dragon's sisters begin seeing odd things and get fearful. The head phantom reassures them that they just moved in although the photo that once held them is now of the seedy pervert. One of the female ghosts, Siu-Sin, captures Dragon's attention and the next evening he takes her out.

Driving along on a dinner date, Dragon's car breaks down so Siu-Sin makes what appears to everyone else as an ugly cardboard vehicle while it looks and drives like a Porsche to Dragon. The couple arrive at and enter the restaurant but Siu-Sin's power is diminished by a door god. Coincidentally, Dragon's fiancée, Biggie, is at another table. Biggie

sees Dragon talking (apparently) to an empty chair...Siu-Sin is invisible to all but Dragon. She also has enough power left to make the hen-picking Biggie act like a horny nympho. There is a lot more of this type of humor such as turning real guns into toy dart guns, lots more mind control, and a scene where Dragon's sisters and Biggie try but fail to prove that Siu-Sin is a ghost.

Of course she has to tell Dragon the truth. Siu-Sin however is not related to the blood-drinking elves. Though the evil ones have power over her, she tells Dragon that to defeat the elves he must destroy the old photo before the 49th victim is reached. Uncle Kau (the wise priest) and the others are already taking steps to rid the phantoms with little success and more comic results.

The cast is not noteworthy and *Phantoms* has the typical effects and stunts. The best part comes early in the film when Dragon is part of a SWAT team engaging some criminals in a violent gun battle and foot chase. Lots of colored lights and animation dominate the fighting once again. Having seen plenty of these movies in the past, the ending was never in doubt. I'm not saying that *Phantoms* is bad but just that there are better choices. It has a sitcom feel to it. A good comparison would be a mix of *Bewitched* (the Dick Sargent years) with a touch of *Benny Hill*...you smile but you really don't laugh much.

LADY BATTLE COP

1990

Directed by Akitomo Okamoto

Reviewed by Patrick Macias

It's a classic Asian trash opening. "Somewhere--Sometime--" reads the evocative title card, suggesting fairy tale

territory like Oz, Narnia, or Middle-Earth. Wrong. It's a sleazy Japanese nightclub populated by off-work office girls in black halter tops and part-time punks sporting green and orange hair-don'ts. Everyone is jumping and twitching to the music as though the Blitzkrieg Bop was just discovered the day before. Then a militia of heavily armed, camouflage-clad goons enter. Everyone, the girls, the punks, the bartenders gets riddled with bullets a la Chow-Yuen Fat. When the smoke clears, the leader of the gang speaks, talking pretty tough for a guy addressing a room full of corpses. "Now this city is run by the Karuta cartel. If you want to continue living, cooperate with us completely. We're in charge...Obey us!" Cut to the title: *Lady Battle Cop*.

The story goes that Rob Bottin's designs for *Robocop* were inspired by the Japanese Space Sheriff TV shows like *Gavan* and *Jaspion*. A few years later, when cheap toy stores were filled with third-world knock-offs like *Robert Cop*, Toei reacted with a made-for-video feature, *Lady Battle Cop*. The outcome isn't blessed by greatness (with no rubber monsters to speak of, how could it be?) but it does offer enough cheap thrills to satisfy any fan's daily quota of girls, guns, gadgets, and gangsters.

The armed gang is Team Phantom, the Karuta cartel's commando squad. After the cartel has secured control of 75% of Neo Tokyo (with a name like that, you'd half expect to see the motorcycle gangs of *Akira* speed by, but no such luck), the authorities get wise and vow to stop crime with a top secret Battle Robot project. One night at the lab, research scientist Naoya and his girlfriend, reigning Neo Tokyo tennis champ Kaoru, are attacked by Team Phantom. In the ensuing pyrotechnics, both appear to die in a wall of flame. A year later, during a battle for the remaining 25% of Neo Tokyo, *Lady Battle Cop* makes her debut, smacking the cartel hard with an arsenal of high-

tech weaponry. It turns out the dying Naoya managed to squeeze Kaoru into the cybernetic Battle Cop outfit just in the nick of time. The rest of the story progresses as Kaoru/Lady Battle Cop gets revenge on the gang one at a time. At the end, she still has to face the cartel's ace-up-the-sleeve: a muscular, psychic cyborg named Amadeus (insert your own jokes here) who's a NASA experiment gone awry!

As a Toei effort, *Lady Battle Cop* can boast of furious amounts of special effects, stunts, and other pyrotechnical polish. I Love Maria this ain't! It's on par with other Toei robots-versus-crime sagas like *Solbrain* or *Jiban*. Unlike those television series, *Lady Battle Cop* has a high body count, blood on tap, and even a trashy glimpse of Kaoru's robo-nipples, in close-up no less! Other than that, the direction is workmanlike with every little flourish, a bit disappointing since Akihisa Okamoto is responsible for that perennial Asian trash favorite, *The Violent Classroom*.

Broken English is always welcome in such productions and *Lady Battle Cop* has lots. Members of Team Phantom and even TV newscasters spout it often, as if it were the unofficial language of Neo Tokyo. Luckily the version offered by Video Search of Miami offers a more coherent way to enjoy the film -- a subtitled print that has, for my money, the single greatest subtitle of all-time: "You Goddamn RoboBitch!"

VAMPIRE KIDS

1991

Directed by William Chang Kee

Reviewed by Scott Williams

I was wondering before I pushed play on my VCR exactly how frightening a vampire kid would be. For instance, as

good (or bad) Kirsten Dunst performance was in *Interview With A Vampire*, she was hardly a towering figure of horror. Would a clan of tiny bloodsuckers be more frightening just by the sheer number of them? Yes, *Vampire Kids* answers this and many more questions.

Question #1: What do you get when you cross the cast and initial idea of *Gilligan's Island* with the whole hopping-vampireshtick?

Answer: *Vampire Kids*.

Our heroes (?) are shipwrecked on an island that appears to have once been a Japanese stronghold. It also seems that a POW, who is also a vampire, was bricked into a wall and kept asleep by a protective diamond or something. He also rules over a legion of young bouncing baby neck-biters. And wimpy ones at that.

Question #2: What do you get when you take this premise further into the realms of the stupid notion that comedy and horror are necessary bedfellows?

Answer: *Vampire Kids* natch.



There are moments in this film that will make you cringe in horror alright...but from the comedy elements. Even Hot Dog: The Movie gave its cast more dignity. There is one scene involving a snake and male genitalia which in most films would have been an aside if it appeared at all; here it is at least 7 minutes too long and more than 7 minutes unfunny. Most of the slapstick in *Vampire Kids* is so silly and stupid that it completely emasculates any attempt at being truly frightening.

There are scenes of the stranded gang fighting the Kids as if they were involved in some sort of drugged-out chicken fight, as well as a plot by the Kids to fool the leader Vampire (who is still trapped in the wall but need nourishment) into believing that mashed tomatoes were really the blood of the shipwrecked oafs.

Question #3: Why exactly do Asian vampires hop?

Answer: Okay, I lied. *Vampire Kids* does not address this question...but I really want to know. Is it really because when they are buried their feet are tied together? Or is a better answer found in *Freedom From The Greedy Grave*? Son Vampire asks Dad Vampire why they are hopping and Dad answers: "I don't know." So they stop hopping. Someone really needs to educate the junior league Draculas that inhabit this film because besides being whining, wimpy losers, the hopping was beginning to piss me off.

Anyway, the madcap attempt to leave the island, fight over the diamond, avoid and/or destroy the lil' vamps, avoid and/or destroy the big bad vamp fills the space when the Gilliganians aren't insulting each other or attempting to seduce each other and various scary stuff like that.

Question #4 (And to many of you, most important): What are the two best things about *Vampire Kids*?

Answer: Both appear on Amy Yip and are used to the fullest extent in this lame comic horror film. Yip fans only need apply. Oh, and while I'm on a roll...

GINSENG KING

1989

Directed by Rotar Ru-Tar

Reviewed by Scott Williams

...Never has a movie struck me as being as unnecessary as *The Ginseng King*. Like making a soup out of carrots, rhubarb, golf balls and Pepto Bismol, this film takes a bunch of bad ingredients and attempts to make a palatable film chowder -- it fails miserably.

I presume this was meant to be a fantasy film geared toward preteens a la *The Neverending Story* or something but man is it bad. It would appear to be the story of a young boy who, in his efforts to capture (?) a ginseng root to boil as a medicine for his mother, comes across the legendary Thousand Year Ginseng. This Thousand Year Ginseng holds the secrets to amazing healing powers and eternal life. He also looks like a short guy running around in a modified giant condom outfit complete with tentacle-like appendages and whiskers.

Now, this weird, although attractively outfitted, woman and her gang of leper warriors are also after the Thousand Year Ginseng and come across the old guy as he is trying to save our young hero's mother who has been bitten by a Nazi zombie who is called a bouncing corpse but seems to walk okay for a dead guy and loves to spout his only line -- "Heil Hitler."

Now, wrap all this up with the same approach as my other fave this issue, *Vampire Kids* (humor + horror = hit), and we have one more prime example as to why this equation is rarely correct. In comparison, both these films only make me long for the Western offerings, *Fright Night* and *Fright Night II*. At least in those movies, the humor + horror isn't badly subtitled.

EVIL DEAD TRAP

1, 2 & 3

~ An Overview Of The Japanese Horror Trilogy ~

EVIL DEAD TRAP

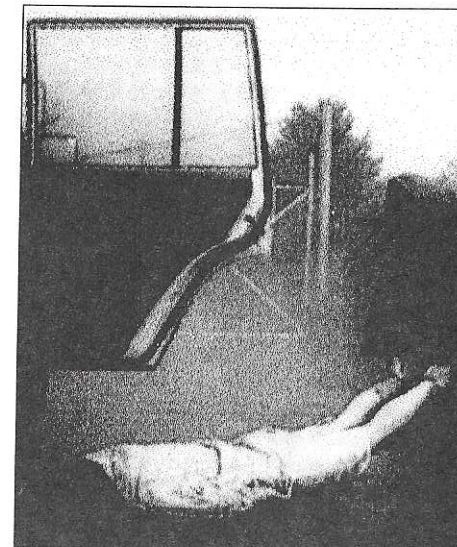
1989

Directed by Toshiharu Ikeda

Reviewed by John Crawford

This letterboxed video begins with Nami, a late night TV show host, as she asks her viewers to send in their home-made videotapes. Soon she receives a cassette that shows a bloody s&m torture and murder. This outrages her and along with her TV production staff, they decide to look for the location depicted in the snuff video. The crew take off in their ATV and soon find the place they are looking for. It's an abandoned factory that is fenced in and clearly posted with warnings to keep the hell out. Does this stop our heroes? You must be kidding.

This Japanese horror film is very intense. Dario Argento, Sam Raimi, Wes Craven, John Carpenter, and Frank Henenlotter are the major influences present here. Is it homage or rip-off? I know it must be hot because this video has a subtitle translation by our Editor, the Honorable Tom Weissner and his lovely bride. Their work here is excellent; the story is very easy to follow and there are no syntax errors so prevalent in Asian films. The movie starts off very strong and maintains its momentum straight through to the shocking ending.



There are many outstanding special effects through-out *Evil Dead Trap*. Heavy into leather and bondage, spfx director Hidekazu Kishiura and his crews present some visually shocking murders as the group with Nami, played by Miyuki Ono, is gradually separated and knocked off. The villain of the piece is infatuated with Nami and she is baited and trapped. Along the way, she sees her best friends killed most horribly. After enduring incredible terror, she decides to stand and confront her enemy.

Each member of the group is murdered in the most hideous manner, each one more horrible than the one before. Nami's

make-up person Rei has a hot sex session with her boyfriend Kondou and is then quickly murdered by the perverted monster, Hideki. One of the best sequences is the murder of Nami's photographer, Masako. It involves a bank of TV monitors [a la Nam June Paik, the avant-garde video artist], heavy bondage, a giant machete, and a jury-rigged cross-bow. This segues into one visually exciting scene involving bottle rockets [My personal favorite on the 4th of July]!

Composer Tomohiko Kira has studied the works of Argento very closely. His use of staccato strings and rising crescendos to build the intense moods of the chase are directly influenced by the great Italian master. Screenwriter Takashi Ishii also has looked to Argento's work, presenting one bizarre scene after another setting up the "gothic" proportions of the movie landscape(dreamscape). Besides the obvious titular reference to Sam Raimi's classic Evil Dead films, the cinematographer pays homage with the hi-speed, B&W, low angle traveling POV shot representing the monster rushing around the abandoned factory site.

All kudos must go to director Toshiharu Ikeda who does an outstanding job blending all the influences and ingredients. Evil Dead Trap is like a great rollercoaster; when the ride is over you want to ride it again.

EVIL DEAD TRAP 2

1991

Directed by Isou Hashimoto

Reviewed by Thomas Weisser

(Excerpt reprinted from ATC #4)

"Is this what you wanted? Is it over now? See how violence and sex merge at the same point?"

Those words are shouted during a brutal girl-fight at the conclusion of Evil Dead

Trap 2. Ami Kageyama screams these prophetic words at Aki Ootani moments before plunging a knife deep into the girl's back. And consider this: a few scarce seconds earlier, Ami's left arm was disjointed and savagely hacked off.

Both opponents are coated in blood; gore is flowing freely. In fact, what's this?! the heroine is reaching *inside* the gaping wound of a freshly slaughtered body. She's pulling out intestines and assorted entrails!

The conclusion of this film is a savage cinematic spectacle reminiscent of Dario Argento's *Phenomenon* with a sly nod to *Inferno*. It's amazing. Astonishing. But oddly bewildering.

It's especially bewildering because, upon first glance, Evil Dead Trap 2 seems to make no sense at all. That is, *upon first glance*. But after close scrutiny (put up the *Do Not Disturb* sign while watching this one) not only does it make sense, but it takes us where few films have the guts to go.



Evil Dead Trap 2 tells the story of Aki (Youko Nakagima), an unattractive, overweight girl who "lives a hermit existence" as a projectionist in a neighborhood cinema. She passes her time by killing prostitutes, butchering them and cutting their stomachs out. Incidentally, these vicious murders are depicted in disturbingly graphic detail, including one excruciating segment involving a victim who refuses to die. Intestines dangle obscenely from the girl's mutilated genitals while she systematically tries to escape and fight back, both at the same time. But finally her body betrays her and she throws herself into a convulsing, violent death on the pavement of a wet Tokyo alley.

Eventually Aki finds herself involved in a deadly love/hate relationship with her beautiful friend Ami (Rie Kondou), a former pop singer turned TV news reporter. The conflict between these two girls is heightened by the sexual aggressions of a mutual boyfriend named Kurahshi (Shirou Sano). In short, he fucks them both. Ami gets pregnant; Aki gets jealous. This is the catalyst for the film's blood-bath finale.

Meanwhile, Aki is tormented by the frequent manifestation of a freaky-looking child named Hideki (is he real? or the ghost from a past abortion? Who knows?). Since she's the only one who ever sees Hideki, her boss suggests that she get psychiatric help from a lady-spiritualist named Kannazuki. But the holy woman freaks out and tries to kill Aki, screaming: "An evil power surrounds and protects you!" This, of course, is true. True, but also unfortunate for the spiritualist.

However, don't be confused. All this is only window dressing; it's the mustard on the hamburger. Did I mention the film is really about a girl and her descent into madness? I believe it's a contemporary version of Roman Polanski's *Repulsion*. With a very important difference. In fact, the thing which separates this motion pic-

ture from most other films is its "point of view." This movie is told as a first-person narrative, a technique virtually unused in cinema art.

In Evil Dead Trap 2, director Isou Hashimoto creates a different type of first-person narrative. We see the entire film through the eyes of the lead character. Or more precisely, we see the world as Aki Ootani sees it. In her fantasy world, Aki's friends marvel over her "fantastic job as a movie projectionist" while they discount their own jobs (sales manager, television news reporter, theatre owner, etc.).

(Also) in her demented world, she is being stalked by a child. It's probably the "ghost" of the baby she aborted years before. His name is Hideki. This ghost-child gives her instructions to kill prostitutes and remove their stomachs, presumably so they can never conceive. As her madness progresses, she allows Hideki to take over everything and everyone in her world. Her best friend, Amy, announces that she's pregnant: "The baby is growing in my stomach. His name is Hideki." And boyfriend Kurahshi turns out to be a married man with a wife and child. His child is also Hideki. And, without giving away the ending, everything comes full circle when Hideki makes his presence known in an unconventional fashion.

The film is a good looking project with some of the best night-photography imaginable, especially the murder sequences shot against screaming Tokyo billboards. These scenes are drenched in garish reds and yellows, underlining a distinct futuristic look. The two lead actresses are exceptional in very complex, difficult roles.

As I mentioned earlier, it's amazing. Astonishing. And bewildering. Certainly, this is an uncompromising film that demands much from its audience. EDT2 is not afraid to take enormous risks. It is an intelligent, well-written (don't forget, gross out) horror film. *For adults*. That, alone, makes it very exceptional.

EVIL DEAD TRAP 3

1993

Directed by Seishu Toshiharu Ikeda
Reviewed by Steve Sanders

Starring: Shiro Sano, Megumi Yokoyama.

I'll admit that I watched Evil Dead Trap 3 at a disadvantage, never having seen parts one or two. I've heard many things about those first two--mostly on how gory and bloody and up on the fright-meter they were. Thus, I had some preconceived notions on what to expect. I thought for sure I was going to see some sort of zombie fest, with the rivers of red flowing freely. With that in mind, I'll say that I was both disappointed and pleased at the same time.

First of all EDT3 is not that gory. Sure a few people get whacked in the face with an ax and someone's got a huge refrigerator filled with body parts, but overall, the blood factor was quite a disappointment. No zombies ate anyone. No one's head got shot/lopped/ripped off. Not that much blood

spurred. In fact it was almost the opposite--a serious crime story. What this lacked in the blood spillage department though, it more than made up for it in story.

EDT3 tells the story of a policewoman who while investigating a student's suicide, finds the case related to the murders of young women who have been washing up on a seagull infested shore headless and limbless.

The man suspect is a professor who might or might not have been having an affair with the suicidal student. She says they were, he says they weren't. He's married and denies it.

Where's his wife though? Why was he involved with another student whose



torso ended up on the beach years ago? There's lots of unanswered questions that need to be addressed before we figure out what is going on.

Throw in some taught chases, a very interesting and creepy scene in a lesbian bar, and after a while the questions start to get answered. I don't want to say much since figuring out who did what is half the fun.

The overall story is very interesting and the conclusion is tense and pretty exciting. It kept me on the edge of my seat. It's very well filmed and quite atmospheric. The seagull infested beach is especially weird to see.

It's all got a nice Hitchcock/film noir pace and feel to it. If you want a blood-fest, look elsewhere. But, if you want a nice mystery with a little blood thrown in, don't miss Evil Dead Trap 3.

RAPEMAN

RAPEMAN:
Politically Incorrect
Japanese Style
A Review Of The Rapeman
Films
by Ray Ranaletta

RAPEMAN



A brain-frying, jaw-dropping, INCREDIBLY entertaining pair of exploitation films which ruthlessly attack Political Correctness and militant feminism with a vengeance that could never be successfully accomplished in *any* US release. -- mainstream, low budget, no budget, or otherwise! The fact that both films were mainstream theatrical releases in Japan, superbly acted, beautifully photographed with crisp and appropriately scored soundtracks should put to rest any complaints that these films are cheap pieces of garbage. Fact is that these films will be praised by anyone with a sense of humor and a willingness to indulge in the realm of fantasy filmmaking. Both titles are set in a real world atmosphere, using real world characters, situations and acts but not stunted by the ever-present whims of the Politically Correct Morality Police.

Consequently, both films will be condemned by both men and women who can not distinguish fantasy from reality (they're only fucking movies!) and are locked into a preconceived notion of what

entertainment should and should not consist. The reality that these films would never be released by any US distributor on film or video is just one more of the blatant hypocrisies of our so-called "free society."

The pair of *Rapeman* films are actually three genres wrapped up into an A-1 exploitation stew. Part dramatic thriller, party (warped) comedy, and part sexploitation, both films begin with this bizarre quote -- "Wooden balls should be washed by water!" A fitting howler of an opening which introduces two movies similar in nature yet starkly different in tone and feel.

The basic premise behind both films is that Keisuke is a high school teacher who also just happens to be the hero, *Rapeman*, in his spare time. For a fee, *Rapeman* can be hired to rape women who have wronged in one way or another their male or female counterparts. In and of itself, the sole concept seems at its worst to be a product of a sick mind and at its best, a grossly offensive idea. The

truth of the matter is that director Nagaisho has taken the patently offensive premise and cleverly twisted it by using humor and sarcasm spiced with the obvious exploitation elements in order to create a wickedly funny and ultimately successful counter-punch to the way out-of-whack Politically Correct culture.

In Part One, we learn that Keisuke (aka Rapeman) and his uncle have created Rapeman Services. Their motto is "Righting wrongs through penetration!" Just one of so many hysterically funny and flippant lines that add to this film's charm. It would seem that their organization exists to fund the Sunflower Orphanage, where Keisuke spent his youth...see, their heart is in the right place!

Rapeman soon becomes involved in some political intrigue as he is set up to rape the wife of a politician running for the Senate. With the politician duly embarrassed, on top of his wife committing suicide (the result of Rapeman's attack), he drops out of the race. The election is won by his rival, who set the rape up and is in league with the Yakuza. Rapeman learns of the conspiracy he was used for and, along with his uncle and a female reporter, Rikado, uncover the crooked politician and, more importantly to rapeman, avenge his newly understood wrongful attack on the other man's wife.

Rapeman 1 is filled with incredibly comic dialogue such as the following: Prior to Rapeman's first attack, we witness his soon-to-be victim blowing off her boyfriend with such classic lines as "Have you ever looked at your face in the mirror?" and "You should feel honored to drive me home!" Adding insult to injury she continues, "Never call me again...but I'll keep the gift." Well, dammit, them's fighting words. To the rescue comes Rapeman, attacking the woman after crashing through her apartment window, using male-fantasized retorts like "I have a gift from the list of guys you've bank-

rupted!" and "This is just a taste of the anger felt for you" and "It's time for repentance." With these ball-busting lines, Rapeman finishes his attack, climaxing (pun intended) with the height of male fantasy themes, the victim moaning "Gimme more" as he leaves her apartment.

Now I'm sure a few of you are saying this is sick, gross and repellent. That's probably being kind since this is a family zine...NOT! And the answer is a resounding NO FUCKING WAY! The rapes, while explicit and intense, are not hardcore (for those of you offended by such things). The film actually presents a positive point of view, albeit a warped one. This point is the key to the film's success. That is, how to push the bounds of political correctness in such a way as to shock the prudes, prisses, militant feminists and jackbooted morality police while twisting normally offensive subject matter into a comically perverse tale of justice. Rapeman is an unleashed wet dream. Fantasy in its extreme form.

After just thrashing through Part 1 and how the satirically comedic elements are the saving grace of what could have been a thoroughly unredeeming film, along comes Rapeman 2. Director Nagaisho once again turns conventional wisdom upside down with lightning, in fact, striking twice. Interestingly enough, Nagaisho does it by concentrating more on the exploitative aspects of the film, giving the broad satire of the first film (although still important) a back seat to a Death Wish-style scenario. This plot takes Rapeman into darker waters. While retaining the necessary element of fantasy needed to overcome the moral conundrum of this character, Rapeman 2 focuses more on its dramatic aspects than sheer outrageous levity.

The second film opens with our hero, still sporting all black leather attire and Jason-style hockey mask, chasing a woman down a flooded dimly lit street

After the woman is cuffed and stuffed (oops, sorry), Rapeman glares at the camera quoting, "When the law is powerless, I will punish the guilty." This opening scene sets the tone of Part 2 as Rapeman is being treated less satirically by the director. Nagaisho concentrates here on a level of vigilantism not a forcefully apparent in the original. No explanation, humorous or otherwise, is given for the woman's rape and as such seems more brutal than any in the previous film.

The reasoning behind this apparent change in tone becomes clear as the film moves forward. The dark side of human nature will be attacked in a more ruthless fashion. But before it all becomes too dark and foreboding, Nagaisho once again shows the humor inherent and necessary to the films success by having Rapeman, now as his alter ego Keisuke, high school teacher, comically embarrassed by his female students regarding phone sex and prostitution. This after admonishing them regarding the lure of easy money and the virtue of working hard and applying ones self. This, along with other comic interludes between Keisuke and returning journalist, Rikako, strike a successful balance in combing Part One's deliciously dark wit with the harsher tone of this film.

The Death Wish motif soon raises its head in Part Two as Rapeman and his uncle investigate the death of a young child while recovering in a hospital after being struck by a car. The young girl, Mina, lived in the same tenement as our protagonists and was deeply cared for by both. Their scenes together are touching and sweet and her subsequent "suspicious" death provides some moments that will tug at the heartstrings of the most jaded Asian trash fan among us. Throw into the mix illegal organ donations (guess what happened to Mina) sold to the Hong Kong mafia by unscrupulous doctors and provided cover by a corrupt



attorney. Uncle initially falls in love with this lawyer but Rapeman, Uncle and Rikako soon find themselves hip deep in body parts.

Nagaisho handles Rapeman's revenge and subsequent victory with an unparalleled combination of brilliantly staged revenge rapes, a shocking although unsurprising burst of violence from Uncle, and the comic hijinks of Rikako deftly tied together in one amazing bundle of politically incorrect scenes, dialogue and attitude! Such a standout example of scene, dialogue and attitude occurs during the attack on the corrupt female attorney, Yasuda, by Rapeman after uncovering her connection with the organ donation scam. Particularly chilling, dark and unsettling, yet justified and satisfying, is when Rapeman unleashes his fury on a seemingly higher plane than ever before. As he viciously bangs away, Rapeman condemns Yasuda with statements such as "You exchanged a sinless life for

money," and a disturbing "Think about the torment of the parents who lost their child," and finally "A woman like you must be sent to hell, you are even more sinful than the killers!" Yow, that's serious shit and it is delivered with no underlying humor whatsoever. Oh yes, and just for the record, Rapeman deals with the mafia leader and the chief doctor. I begin to chuckle uncontrollably thinking, "could it possibly happen?" I don't want to give anything away but it's safe to say that Rapeman has not yet become a gender bender.

So there you have 'em - - Rapeman 1 and Rapeman 2. See these films!! Damn political correctness. Tell the Feminazi's, both left and right wing do-gooders, and anyone else without a sense of humor to take the proverbial long walk off a short pier. This is high quality filmmaking of the most outrageous kind. Both of these films are sure to become cult classics! As Uncle says toward the end of Rapeman 2, "There will be more hardships facing us but we must do it, otherwise the world will never be safe." Now this is entertainment!

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TALKIN' TRASH

This Issues Matinee: Erotic Ghost Story 3

Review by John Dodd

Review by Scott Williams

First, let's dispense with what is on everyone's mind. There are eight sex scenes, all with abundant nudity. The actresses are attractive, particularly Pauline Chan and Chi Jing-Wen. Furthermore, the viewer is given much more than just quick peeks, most of the scenes last a long time.

So, it's a film that lives up to its title, huh? Not even close. The one thing this film doesn't have is eroticism. Despite the exploitation elements, the sex scenes lack passion, both in the narrative and heat content. All the sex is shot using slow motion, soft focus, bright colors and low-key emotion. So low-key the actors might as well be mannequins.

The plot follows a young couple, Chu Chung (Huang De-Bin) and Hsia Hui (Chan Bao-Lian or Pauline Chan) who have been arranged to marry. Chu isn't certain of this arrangement and Hsia must disguise herself (unconvincingly) as a male while they travel.

The couple come to a temple and meet Reverend Wick (Shing Fui-On), who is the (very broad) comic relief. Chu becomes enchanted by the portrait of some women on a wall of the ruins. Wick tells Chu that he can visit said women in their world but only for 24 hours. If he is not back, his spirit will be "lost in the void."

Although obviously a rip-off of Chinese Ghost Story, this film could have been a fun time. It certainly delivers on the exploitation goods. But the film is flat. The sex scenes are endless (not in a good way), the story provides no insight or emotion, and the jokes are so bad the viewer is left to puzzle if they were meant to be funny. Yeah, the cinematography is nice but many other better film fantasies have nice photography.

The one saving grace is the action climax complete with long robes as weapons and people thrown through walls etc. The action scenes are fast and fun to watch but any film with the word "erotic" in its title that causes the viewer to continually look at their watch is a failure. And Erotic Ghost Story 3 certainly is.

You know there is something wrong when a film actually takes a miniature monk inside a woman's vagina (or maybe it's her ass, I'm not quite sure) as if it's a cave he can hide in. And I mean, actually INSIDE. And from the view it must be a very unhealthy woman. Granted, she is the villain of the pic and is quite possibly a transvestite, but still, it looks pretty nasty in there. Just one of the many visual treats that await your journey through the "Hellgate."

The plot is basically your typical "ghost wants to be made flesh" but needs (in this case) to eat the flesh of virgins or something. And she does...in graphic detail at an orgy. And basically the plot is inconsequential as it really only serves as a bridge between sex scenes. All of which are picture-postcard sex scenes - - soft focus, slow motion and torch-lit. This is one trashy movie that desperately wants to be an art film.

Erotic Ghost Story 3 should really be called Erotic Breast Story 3 as it features a dazzling array of nude cuties. (Ladies, you, I'm afraid, are only offered a quick glimpse of one male booty.) Now, if all these women getting it on are ghosts and live beyond the Hellgate, why would Chu (Huang De-Bin) or any man want to come back to the material world? It seems to be a lot more fun in the netherworld.

The action sequences are pretty standard...which means that they are pretty fun to watch. Full of flying people, deadly colorful robes and scarves, swordplay and magic. All of these are rolled up into a film that has one small flaw - - the stuff in between the sex and the action is pretty boring stuff. Even the oafish monk Wick gets a bit annoying after awhile. The comedy elements aren't overly funny but you have to make allowances when you receive such a bounty of breasts.

No one who watches something called Erotic Ghost Story 3 (or 1 or 2) can possibly be expecting high-brow entertainment. Enter into the bargain with this understanding and you will not be disappointed by this trip down mammary lane.

PS>

We've gotten a few letters asking us where people can get posters, lobby cards and other memorabilia from their favorite Asian trash (and otherwise) films. Well, we know of two places. One we talked about in ATC #7 and that is:

Dragon Art
PO Box 9307
N. Hollywood, CA 91609

The other is:

Hollywood Movie Posters
557 E. Sahara Avenue
Suite 108
Las Vegas, NV 89104
702-735-8170

Don't be fooled by the latter's name, they just acquired thousands and thousands of posters, lobby cards, etc. from tons of Asian releases.

So if you are in the market for memorabilia, we recommend both of these businesses.

Plus, a correction...the review for *Underground Banker* in ATC #10 should have been credited to Mike Plante. Our apologies to Mike for the error.

Don't miss the next issue of ATC which will include a focus on some of our favorite Asian directors, Japanese and Chinese, as well as an interview with the authors of *The Encyclopedia Of Martial Arts Movies*: Karen Palmer, Bill Palmer and Ric Meyers.

See you next time,

Scott



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